

Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-25

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, MT

1. IN CONVERSATION BETWEEN NATIONALIST PARTY DEPUTY

LEADER VINCENT TABONE AND AMBASSADOR, TABONE SKETCHED OUT HIS VIEW OF PARTY FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY SHOULD NP REGAIN POWER. TABONE IMPLIED THAT THESE POINTS HAD BROAD AGREEMENT IN NP.

2. IN BRIEF, TABONE LISTED THE FOLLOWING: A. NEUTRALITY IN DISPUTES BETWEEN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES.

B. A DEFENSE AGREEMENT WITH NATO. C. NO FOREIGN FORCES STATIONED ON MALTA. D. MILITARY FACILITIES ON STANDBY BASIS WOULD BE PROVIDED, AND THERE COULD BE NATO COUNTRY SHIP VISITS.

3. TABONE ELABORATED THE POINT ON STATIONING OF FORCES BY SAYING THAT THERE WAS NO IDEOLOGICAL OR POLITICAL OBJECTION. NATIONALIST HOWEVER HAD BEEN BURNED IN PAST BY BRITISH MILITARY DRAW DOWNS WHICH HAD A SEVERE IMPACT IN TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT OF MALTESE WORKERS AT BRITISH MILITARY INSTALLATIONS. TABONE SAID MP WOULD WISH TO AVOID ANY SUCH

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POSSIBILITY IN THE FUTURE, SEEKING TO INSURE

EMPLOYMENT FOR MALTESE THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE INDUSTRY AND TOURISM. AT THE SAME TIME, TABONE SAID THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTION TO PRESENCE OF NATO CARETAKER PERSONNEL FOR MILITARY FACILITIES. HE WAS ALSO QUITE CLEAR IN INCLUDING SIXTH FLEET ALONG WITH OTHER NATO COUNTRY SHIPS WHICH WOULD BE WELCOME TO PAY VISITS TO MALTA.

4. REFERENCE TO MEDITERRANEAN DISPUTES AT THIS TIME MUST CERTAINLY BE SEEN IN CONTEXT OF ARAB -ISRAELI PROBLEM.

5. COMMENT: WHILE THE SITUATION COULD OF COURSE CHANGE BETWEEN PRESENT AND SUCH TIME AS NATIONALIST MIGHT RETURN TO POWER, IT APPEARS TO US THAT TABONE'S OUTLINE PROVIDES A REASONABLY PROMISING PLATFORM FROM WHICH TO NEGOTIATE A NEW RELATIONSHIP. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF MINOFF'S SUCCESS IN EXTRACTING FANANCIAL AND OTHER BENEFITS FROM NATO COUNTRIES, NATIONALISTS COULD HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO REFRAIN FROM DEMANDING SOME TANGIBLE REWARDS FOR A COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE. SECURITY GUARANTEES THROUGH A DEFENSE AGREEMENT WOULD BE ONLY PART OF THE QUID PRO QUO.GETZ

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